

Christ Church
Greenville, South Carolina

HABS No. 13-6

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 13

Historic American Buildings Survey
Samuel Lapham, District Officer
42 Broad St. Charleston, S.C.

CHRIST CHURCH
North Church and North Streets
Greenville, Greenville County
South Carolina

Owner: Episcopal Church.

Date of Erection: 1850.

Architect: Hon. Joel R. Poinsett.(?)

Builder:

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: One, and balcony.

Materials of Construction: Brick.

Other Existing Records: See text.

CHRIST CHURCH, GREENVILLE, S. C.

SURVEY NO. 13-6

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This church was first established in Greenville, South Carolina in 1821, at which time it was known as St. James' Mission. At that period Greenville and Pendleton were the outposts of the Episcopal Church in the sparsely settled northwest portion of the State. The original church building was erected near the site of the present church, and was begun in 1825 and consecrated as "Christ Church" in 1828 by Bishop Bowen.

With the passage of time, this building suffered from deterioration and was also outgrown. In 1845, resolutions were passed by the vestry looking towards building a new church.

In 1847, a resolution of thanks was given "to that eminent citizen and thorough Churchman, Hon. Joel R. Poinsett, formerly a member and vestryman of the church, for the plans and estimates for a new church which he has submitted to the vestry". Mr. Poinsett (1779-1857) had been Secretary of War in the Cabinet of President Van Buren (1837-1841) and U. S. Minister to Mexico (1825-1829). He introduced into the United States from Mexico the flower known as the "poinsettia". It is indicated in the church history that he also furnished the plans for the first Greenville County court house (now destroyed). These references would indicate that he was an "amateur gentleman" architect, like others of this period of the profession.

The congregation experienced difficulty in raising the money for the new church, but after considering the cost of repairing the old building in 1848, declined the bids for the latter purpose and again sought subscriptions for the new building.

On May 29th, 1852, the corner-stone was laid at the northeast corner of the nave under the north transept, the walls of the old church having been torn down and used in the foundations of the new. The contents of the original cornerstone of 1825-1828 were found entirely destroyed, due to the penetration of moisture.

The present gallery was added in 1875.

The transept was added in 1880 and the **chancel** enlarged, the plans for these improvements being furnished by the Rev. J. D. McCollough.

In 1893, the original organ of 1852 was replaced.

The stained glass windows date from 1852, the art glass windows from the period of 1885-1895.

A short extension of the north transept was added in 1918.

Among prominent Episcopal clergymen who served the pulpit of this church were the Rev. C. C. Pinckney, in 1835 and the Rev. Ellison Capers, 1867-1875, and 1876-1887, who later became Bishop of South Carolina.

This building is of interest chiefly as a) representing the small town church type of its period (1840-1850) in upper South Carolina and b) being designed by J. R. Poinsett.

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Source of Material: "History of Christ Church,
Greenville, S.C." (1901) (Written for the 75th
Anniversary)

Minutes of the Vestry.

Notes made from text of above by
H. Olin Jones, Squad Leader,
and condensed by District Officer.

Approved:


District Officer #13

Reviewed 1/26 H.C.F.